Please amend Claims 1, 10-14, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 34, 40, 41 and 42 as follows, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. For the Examiner's convenience, Claims 2-9, 15-17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-33, 37, and 38 are reiterated below without amendment.

1. (Once Amended) A method of stimulating an immune response in a mammal having a pathological condition, comprising:

(a) obtaining [a biological fluid] whole blood from the mammal;

(b) separating the whole blood into a cellular component and an acellular component or a fraction of the acellular component, wherein said acellular component or said fraction of the acellular component contains a targeted immune system inhibitor;

(c) contacting the [biological fluid] acellular component or said fraction of the acellular component with a binding partner capable of specifically binding to [a] said targeted immune system inhibitor;

(d) removing the binding partner bound to said targeted immune system inhibitor from said acellular component or said fraction of said acellular component to produce an altered [biological fluid] acellular component or altered fraction of the acellular component having a reduced amount of the targeted immune system inhibitor;[and

(c)] (e) combining the cellular component with the altered acellular component or altered fraction of the acellular component to produce altered whole blood; and

(f) administering the altered [biological fluid] whole blood to the mammal.

2. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the binding partner is attached to an inert medium to form an absorbent matrix.

3. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the binding partner is covalently joined to the inert medium.

4. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a hollow fiber.

5. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a macroporous bead.

6. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a cellulose-based fiber.

7. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a synthetic fiber.

8. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a flat or pleated membrane.

9. (Reiterated) The method of claim 2, wherein the inert medium is a silica-based particle.

10. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said immune system inhibitor is a host-derived immune system inhibitor selected from the group consisting of [host-derived immune system inhibitors consisting of] interleukin-1 receptor antagonist, transforming growth factor-β, interleukin-4, interleukin-10, [or the] soluble receptors for interleukin-1, soluble receptors for interleukin-2, soluble receptors for interleukin-4, soluble receptors for interleukin-6, soluble receptors for interleukin-7, soluble receptors for interferon-γ and soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β.

11. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said immune system inhibitor is selected from the group [of immune system inhibitors produced by microorganisms] consisting of complement inhibitors produced by microorganisms[,] and homologues of host derived immune system inhibitors that are produced by microorganisms, said homologues selected from the group consisting of homologues of interleukin-10, homologues of soluble receptors for interleukin-1, homologues of soluble receptors for [interferons] interferon α, homologues of soluble receptors for interferon β, [and] homologues of soluble receptors for interferon γ, and homologues of soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β.

12. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is a [naturally-occurring] binding partner [for] to which the targeted immune system inhibitor naturally binds.

~~13~~ 11. (Once Amended) The method of claim ~~12~~ 10, wherein said [naturally-occurring] binding partner is produced recombinantly.

14. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is a fragment of a [naturally-occurring] binding partner to which the targeted immune system inhibitor naturally binds, wherein said fragment specifically binds to said targeted immune system inhibitor.

15. (Reiterated) The method of claim 14, wherein said fragment is produced recombinantly.

16. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is a monoclonal antibody.

17. (Reiterated) The method of claim 16, wherein said monoclonal antibody is produced recombinantly.

16 ~~18.~~ (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is a fragment of a monoclonal antibody that specifically binds to said targeted immune system inhibitor.

19. (Reiterated) The method of claim 18, wherein said monoclonal antibody fragment is produced recombinantly.

18 ~~20.~~ (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is in contact with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of different monoclonal antibodies[,] or fragments thereof, wherein said monoclonal antibodies or fragments thereof are capable of specifically binding to the targeted immune system inhibitor.

21. (Reiterated) The method of claim 20, wherein the monoclonal antibodies, or fragments thereof, are produced recombinantly.

20 ~~22.~~ (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is contacted with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of different monoclonal antibodies[,] or fragments thereof, wherein said monoclonal antibodies or fragments thereof are capable of specifically binding to a plurality of targeted immune system inhibitors.

23. (Reiterated) The method of claim 22, wherein the monoclonal antibodies, or fragments thereof, are produced recombinantly.

24. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is a polyclonal antibody preparation.

23 ~~25.~~ (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said binding partner is comprised of fragments of a polyclonal antibody preparation that specifically bind to said targeted immune system inhibitor.

24 ~~26~~. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is in contact with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of different polyclonal antibody preparations[,] or fragments thereof, wherein said polyclonal antibodies or fragments thereof are capable of specifically binding to the targeted immune system inhibitor.

25 ~~27~~. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is in contact with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of different polyclonal antibody preparations[,] or fragments thereof, wherein said polyclonal antibodies or fragments thereof are capable of specifically binding to a plurality of targeted immune system inhibitors.

28. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the binding partner is a synthetic peptide.

29. (Reiterated) The method of claim 28, wherein the synthetic peptide is conjugated to a carrier.

30. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is contacted with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of synthetic peptides capable of specifically binding to the targeted immune system inhibitor.

31. (Reiterated) The method of claim 30, wherein said mixture of synthetic peptides is conjugated to a carrier.

32. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the [biological fluid] acellular component or the fraction of said acellular component is contacted with a plurality of binding partners comprising a mixture of synthetic peptides capable of specifically binding to a plurality of targeted immune system inhibitors.

33. (Reiterated) The method of claim 32, wherein said mixture of synthetic peptides is conjugated to a carrier.

32 ~~34~~. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein steps (a) through [(c)] (e) are repeated.

37. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal is human.

38. (Reiterated) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal is non-human.

35

35 ~~37~~ ~~40~~. (Once Amended) The method of claim [39] 1, wherein the binding partner bound to the targeted immune system inhibitor is removed by mechanical means.

36 ~~38~~ ~~41~~. (Once Amended) The method of claim [39] 1, wherein the binding partner bound to the targeted immune system inhibitor is removed by chemical/biological means.

~~39~~ ~~42~~. (Once Amended) A method for stimulating an immune response in a mammal having a pathological condition, comprising:

(a) obtaining a [biological fluid] whole blood from a mammal;

(b) separating the acellular component or a fraction of said acellular component of the [biological fluid] whole blood [containing a targeted immune system inhibitor] from the cellular component of the [biological fluid] whole blood, said acellular component or said fraction of the acellular component containing a targeted immune system inhibitor;

(c) contacting the acellular component or fraction of said acellular component containing the targeted immune system inhibitor with [a binding partner] at least one antibody capable of specifically binding to the targeted immune system inhibitor, wherein the antibody is attached to an inert medium to form an absorbent matrix;

(d) [isolating] removing the absorbent matrix comprising the antibody [binding partner] bound to the targeted immune system inhibitor from the acellular component or fraction of the acellular component to produce an altered acellular component or altered fraction of the acellular component;

(e) combining the altered acellular component or altered fraction of the acellular component with the cellular component to produce an altered [biological fluid] whole blood; and

(f) administering the altered [biological fluid] whole blood to the mammal.

Please add the following new Claims 50-56.

38. ~~50~~. (Added) A method for stimulating an immune response in a mammal having a pathological condition, comprising:

(a) obtaining whole blood from a mammal;

(b) separating the acellular component of the whole blood or a fraction of the acellular component of the whole blood from the cellular component of the whole blood;

(c) contacting the acellular component or fraction of the acellular component with at least one antibody that specifically binds to soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β;

(d) isolating the at least one antibody bound to the soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β from the acellular component or fraction of the acellular component to produce an altered acellular component or an altered fraction of the acellular component, respectively;

(e) combining the altered acellular component or the altered fraction of the acellular component with the cellular component to produce altered whole blood; and

(f) administering the altered whole blood to the mammal.

39. ~~51~~. (Added) The method of claim ~~50~~ 38, wherein the at least one antibody is attached to an inert medium to form an absorbent matrix.

40. ~~52~~. (Added) The method of claim ~~51~~ 39, wherein the at least one antibody is covalently joined to the inert medium.

41. ~~53~~. (Added) The method of claim ~~50~~ 38, wherein said at least one antibody is a monoclonal antibody or a fragment of monoclonal antibody that specifically binds to said soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β.

54. (Added) The method of claim 50, wherein the acellular component is contacted with a plurality of antibodies comprising a mixture of different monoclonal antibodies or fragments thereof, wherein said monoclonal antibodies or fragments thereof specifically bind to said soluble receptors for tumor necrosis factors α and β.

Sub B'